

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Strains of bacteria characterized by exhibiting: (a)  
a 7 $\alpha$ -dehydroxylase activity of less than 50%, and (b) a  
bile acid deconjugation activity of less than 50%, and  
5 descendants, mutants and derivatives thereof preserving  
activities (a) and (b); and a pharmaceutical composition  
using one or more of such strains and use of same for  
preventing and treating diseases associated with or caused  
by an altered metabolism of bile acids.